

Seeing and Believing

In the days before poems I lived in a \$48.00/month apartment only 50 ft. from and about 70 ft. above a railroad track.

It was a pretty nice apt, and the location is what made it cheap, that and the neighborhood: Aug. 5 newspapers still lying around

in Sept, winos under the RR bridge, kids in torn T-shirts 11 months out of the year, a perfect set-up for the Times squalor-photo award.

For months I sat at my window and watched the trains go by. They never reminded me of anything and it never entered my head to make comparisons,

so I never got tired of seeing them. It was only after I learned that a train is like a snake or a worm and that even the neighborhood was like

something else that I couldn't just watch anymore. I couldn't get it out of my head that I wasn't seeing the train, that I wasn't living where I was.

Learning sure ruined trains for me. Their rhythm, their time-table rightness, their sounds: everything. It got so I had to move, but it hasn't helped much.

This Is The Life

Quasimodo, Toulouse-Lautrec, Joan of Arc and I are in our favorite bar. It is not the Ritz but it fits us. I used to do my drinking in Long Beach, Cal. but what a mistake that was,

especially in my present condition: I am a withered misshapen man. Noteriety was the last thing I wanted, but for some reason I was the Saloon King of the Beach Cities. Nautical

queens of hygienic mien offered a free short-arm inspection; marauding youths advanced reckless trips to get my ashes hauled; fancy Dans in leather glens bought whirling rounds to